

No 16

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Essay
on
Acute Hepatitis
By
Carter Henry Bradley
of
Virginia -

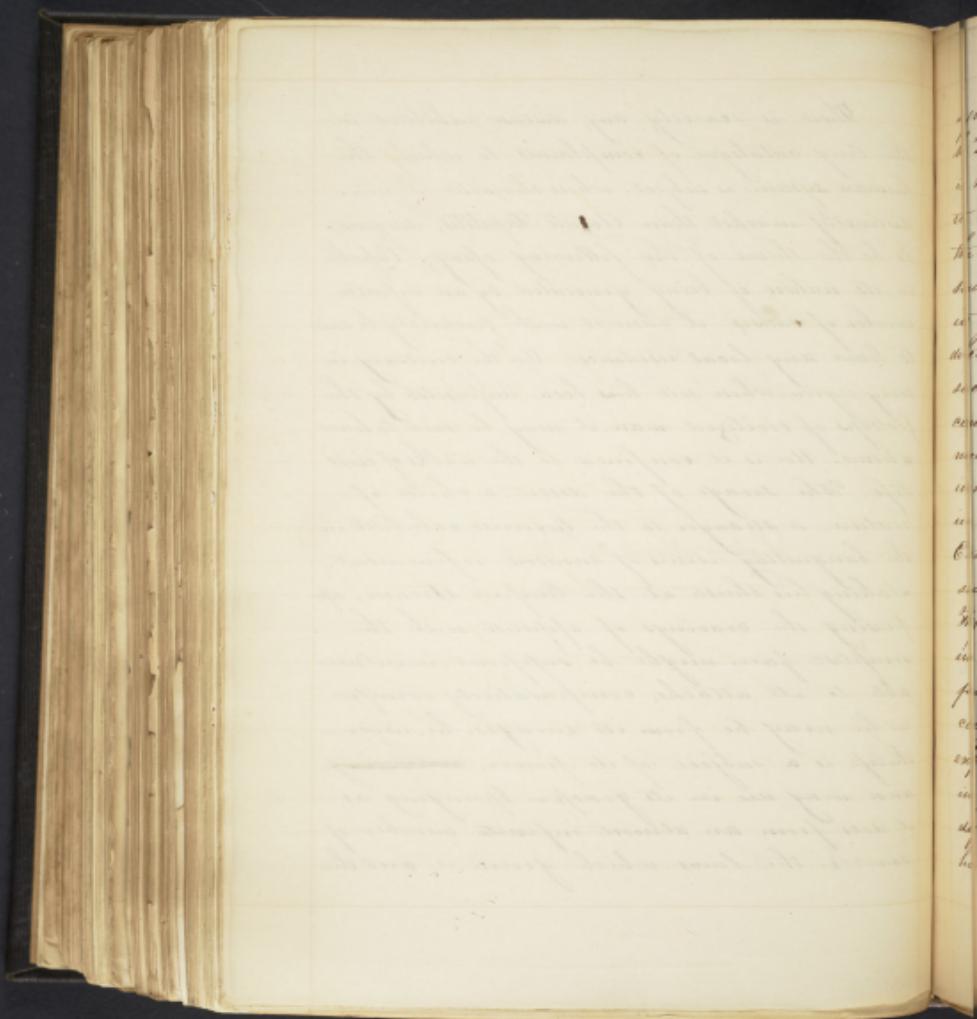
Passed March 20th 1823

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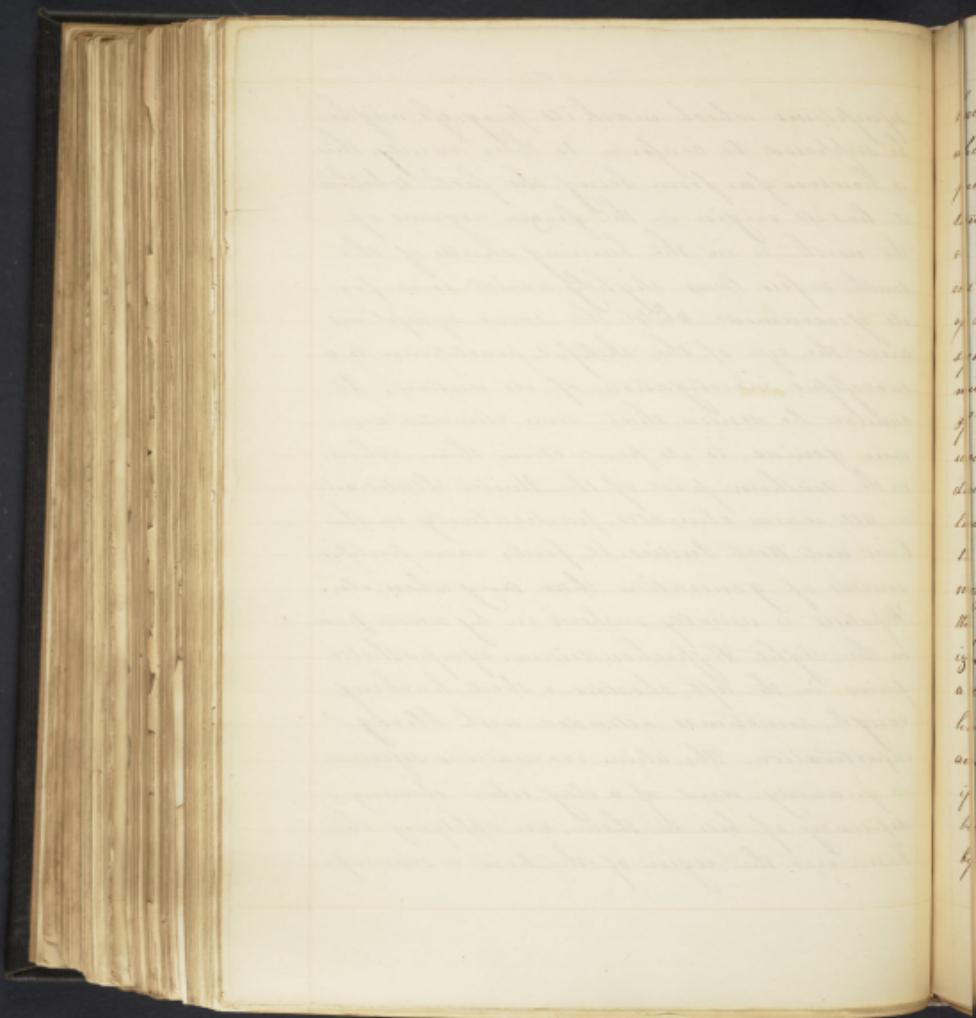
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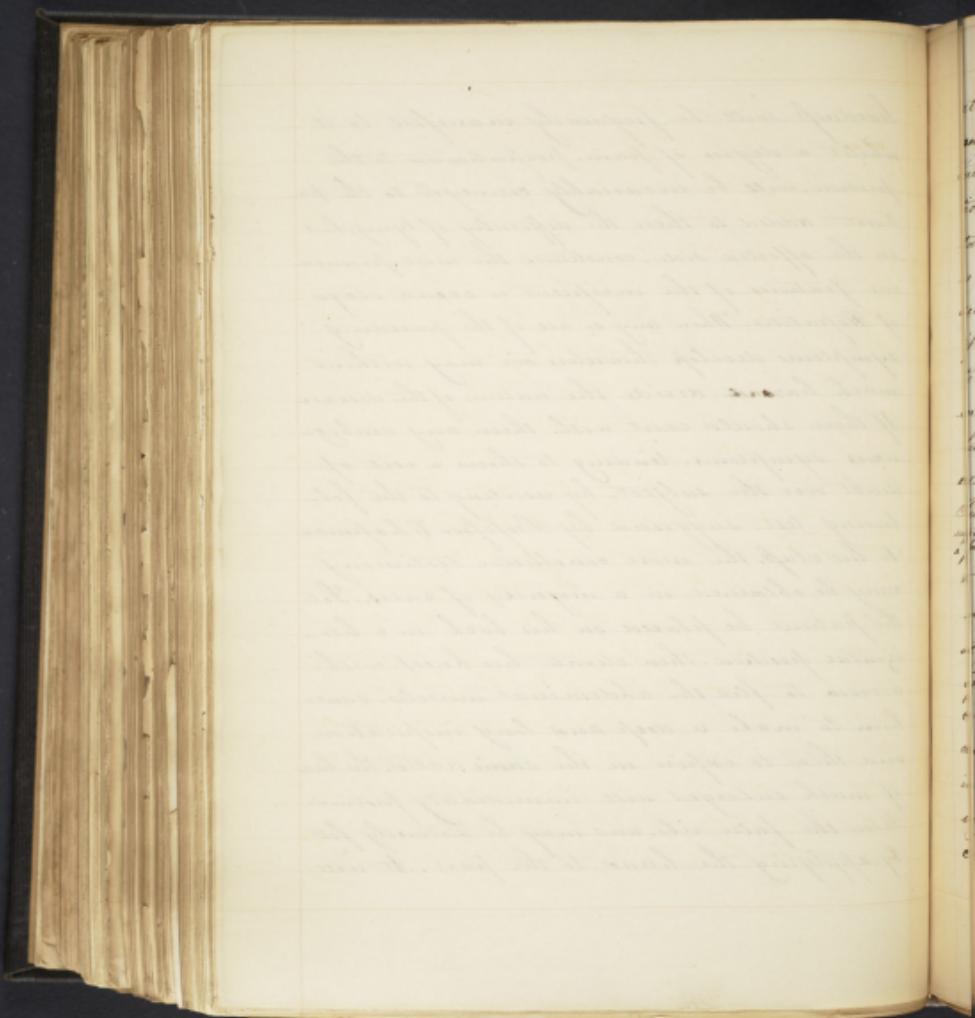
There is scarcely any disease exhibited in
the long catalogue of complaints to which the
human system is subject, whose character is more
distinctly marked than Acute Hepatitis, designed
to be the theme of the following essay. Capable
in its nature of being generated by an infinite
number of causes, it cannot with propriety be said
to have any local residence. On the contrary, in
every region, whose soil has been impanted by the
footsteps of civilized man, it may be said to leave
a home. Nor is it confined to the walks of civic
life. The savage of the desert, a child of
nature, a stranger to the luxuries exhibited in
the banqueting rooms of modern refinement,
stoking his thirst at the limpid stream, ap-
peasing the cravings of appetite with the
simplest fare, might be supposed, invulner-
able to its attacks, comparatively exempt
as he may be from its ravages. He, never-
theless, is a subject of its power. ~~and~~
and may die in its grasp - Springing as
it does from an almost infinite number of
sources, the laws which govern it are tho-



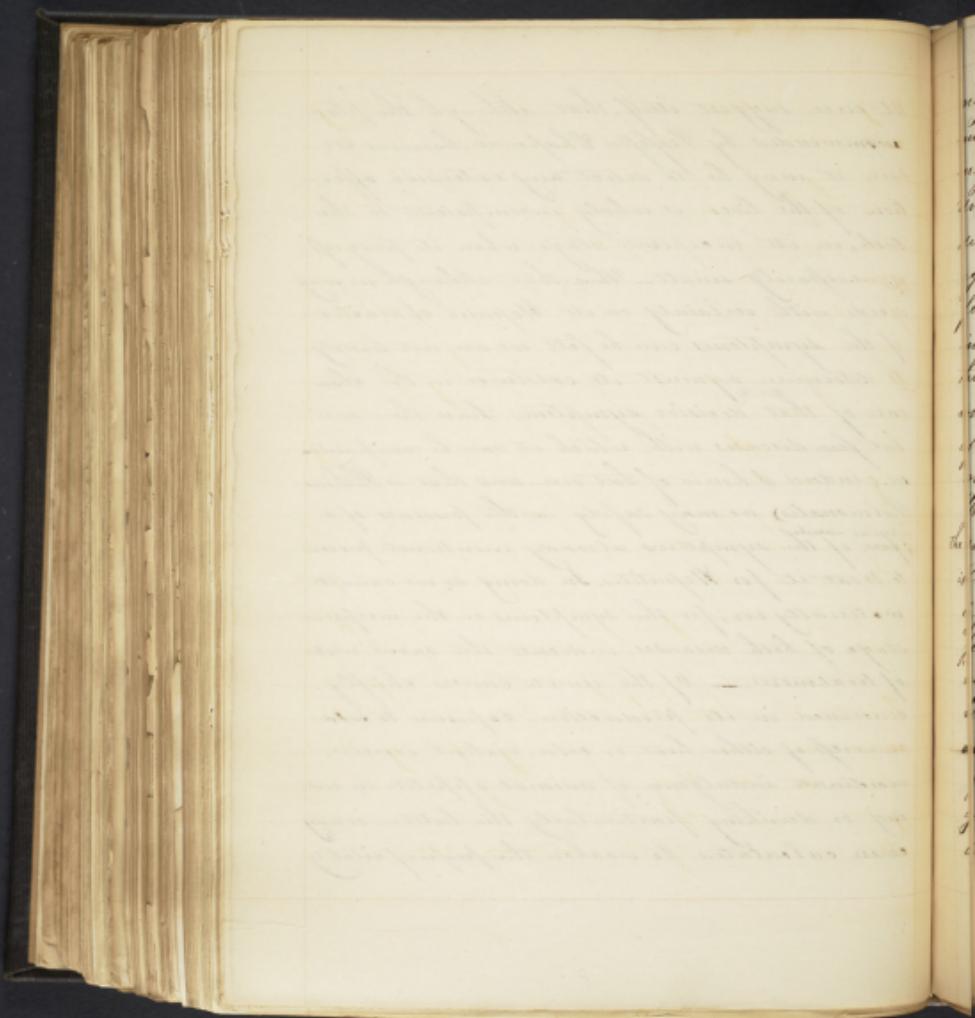
symptoms which mark its progress, might be supposed to conform to their variety, this is however far from being the fact. Whether it has its origin in the frozen regions of the north, or in the burning suns of the south, a few laws slightly varied, serve for its government, whilst the same symptoms direct the eye of the skillful practitioner to a successful investigation of its nature. It cannot be denied that some climates are more genial to its production than others, in the southern part of the United States, and in all warm climates, particularly in the East and West Indies, it finds more prolific sources of generation, than any where else. Hepatitis is usually ushered in by acute pain in the right Hypochondriac, sympatheter pains in the left shoulder, a short hacking cough, sometimes attended with bloody expectoration, The alim evacuations deficient in quantity, and of a clay colour showing a deficiency of bile in them, on applying the hand over the region of the liver, a sense of



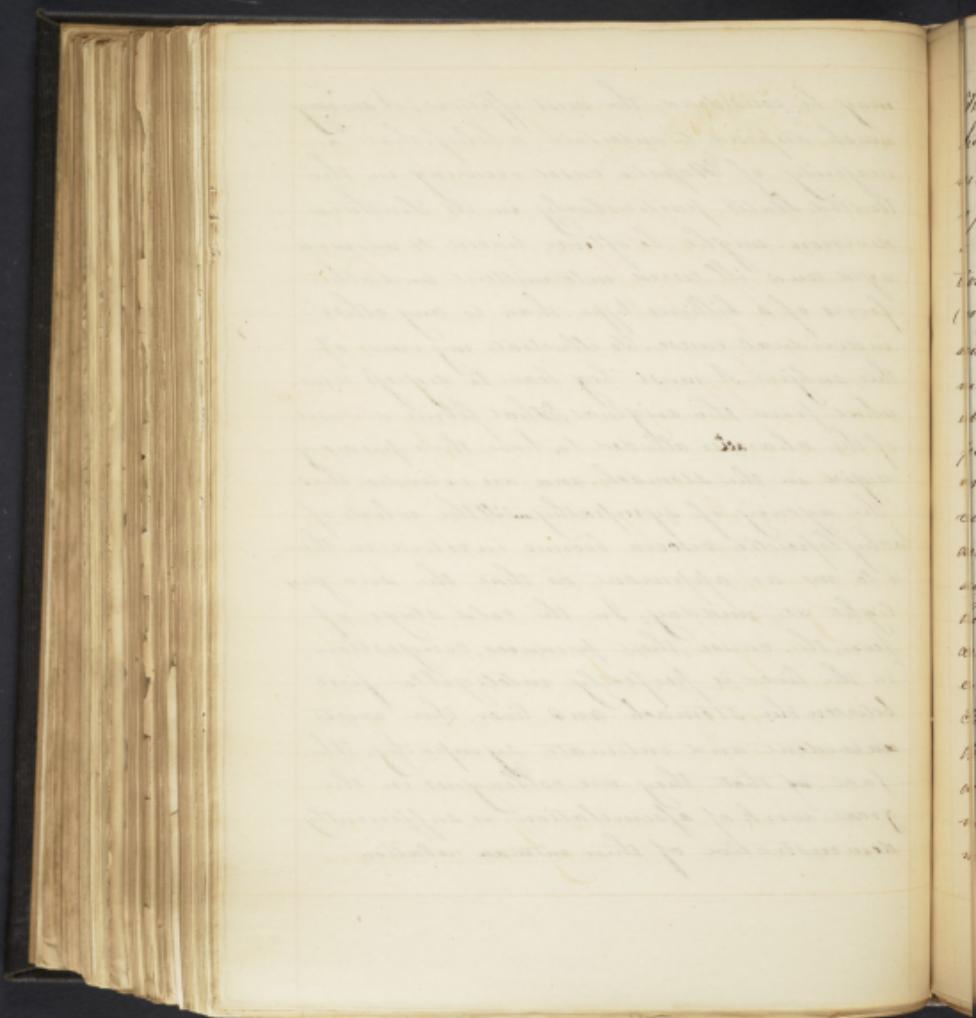
hardness will be frequently manifest to it
whilst a degree of pain, proportionate to this
pressure, will be invariably conveyed to the pa-
tient. added to these the difficulty of lying, but
on the affected side, constitutes the most promi-
nent features of the incipient or acute stage
of Hepatitis. When any or all of the preceding
symptoms develop themselves we may without
much hazard decide the nature of the disease.
If there should exist with them any ambi-
guous symptoms, tending to throw a veil of
doubt over the subject, by resorting to the fol-
lowing test suggested by Professor Chapman
to his class, the more conclusive testimony
may be obtained in a majority of cases. Let
the patient be placed on his back in a hor-
izontal position, then elevate his head, with
a view to flex the abdominal muscles, cause
him to make a deep and long inspiration
and then to expire in the same ratio, the liver
if much enlarged will immediately protrude
below the false ribs, and may be distinctly felt
by applying the hand to the part. It will



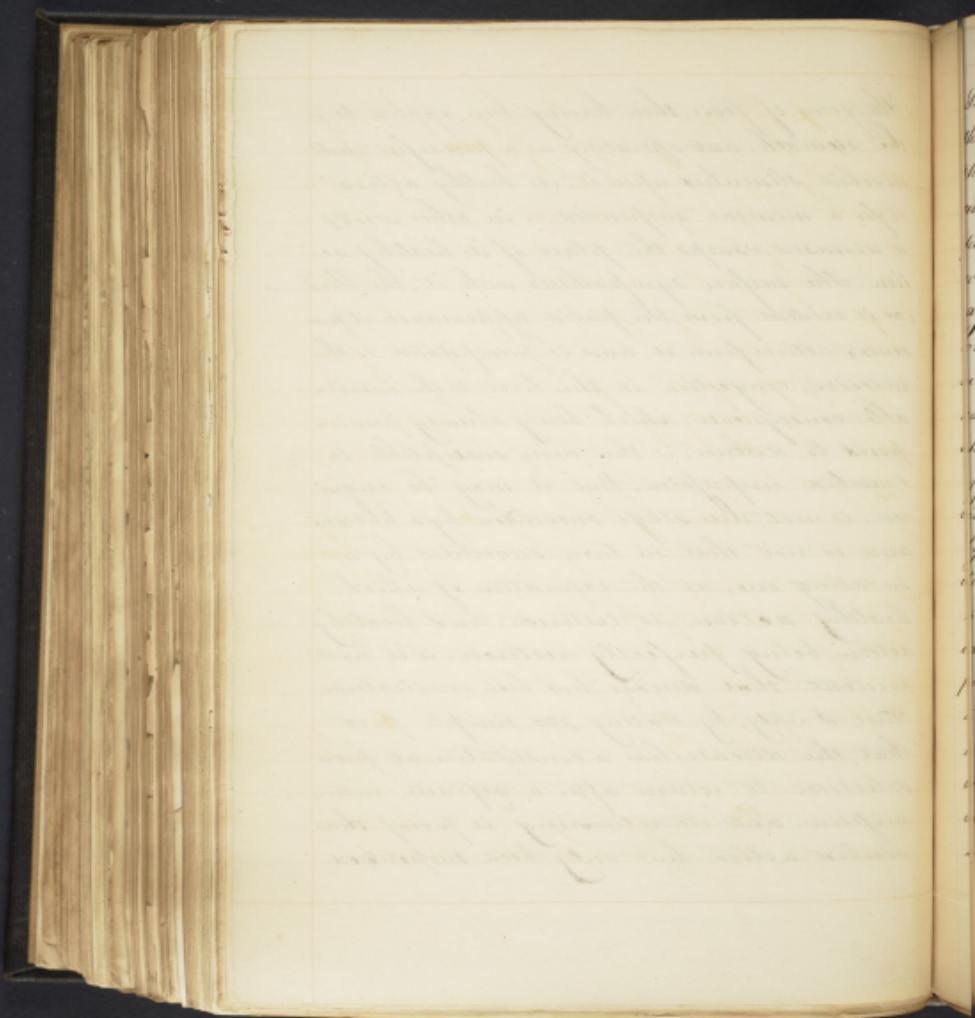
at once suggest itself, that although the plan recommended by Professor Chapman, however certain it may be to detect any extensive affection of the liver, is wholly incompetent to the task, in its incipient stage, when its progress is necessarily small—thus that although we may decide with certainty on its Hepatic character if the symptoms can be felt, we are not hasty to determine against its existence, in the absence of that decisive symptom. Since there are but few diseases with which it can be confounded ex. (indeed I know of but one, and that is Phthisis Pulmonaria) we may safely in the presence of a ^{sufficient number} ~~number~~ of the symptoms already mentioned, proceed to treat it for Hepatitis. In doing so we cannot materially err, for the symptoms in the incipient stage of both diseases, indicate the same mode of treatment— Of the remote causes chiefly concerned in its production, exposure to either an excess of either heat or cold, violent exercise, inordinate indulgence of animal appetite in eating or drinking particularly the latter—or any cause calculated to weaken the powers of vitality.



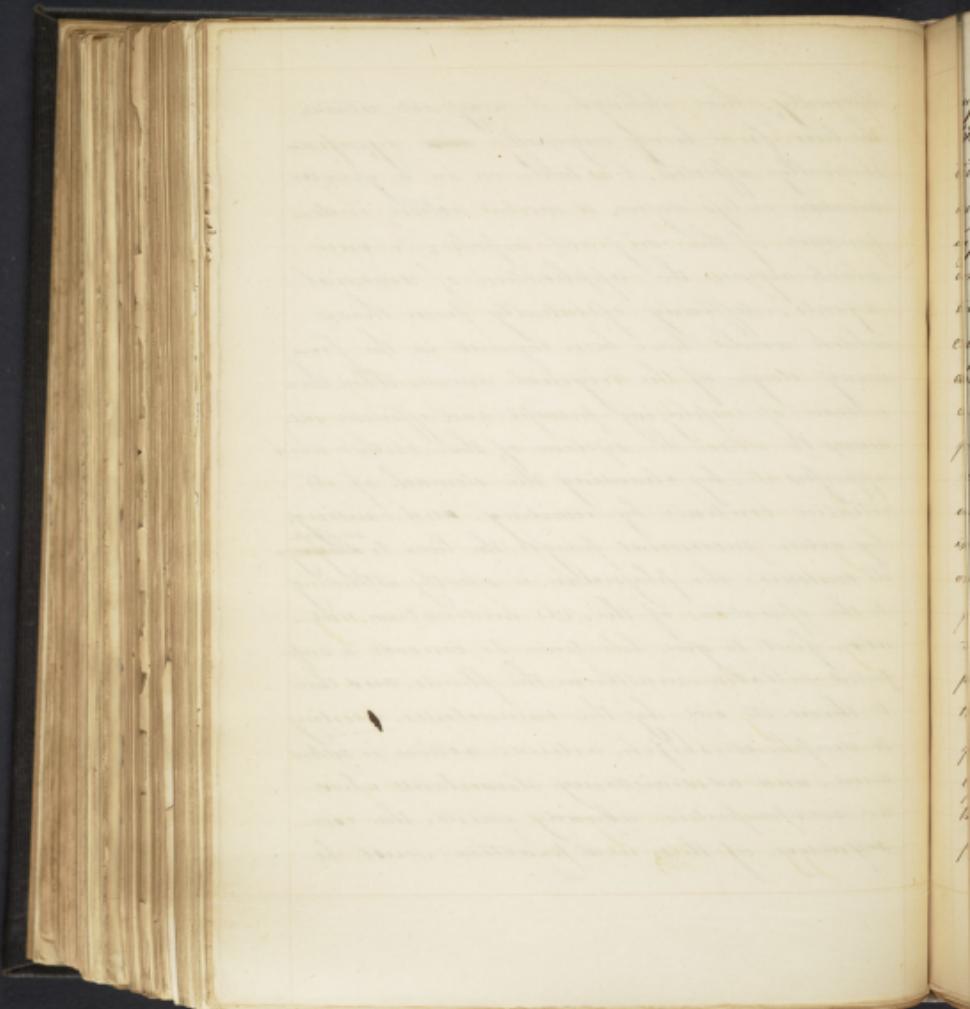
may be considered the most efficient, I am very
much disposed to entertain a belief that a
majority of Hepatic cases occurring in the
United States, particularly in its Southern
division, might be often traced to misman-
aged and ill cured intermittent and other
fevers of a bilious type, than to any other
individual cause. To illustrate my views of
this subject, I must beg leave to depart some-
what from the original. That febrile diseases
of the character alluded to, have their primary
origin in the stomach, and are extended thro'
the agency of sympathy, till the whole of
the chyleopoeitic viscera become involved in them
is to me as apparent as that the sun gives
light at midday. In the cold stage of
fever, the cause that produces congestion
in the liver is perfectly intelligible - first
between the stomach and liver, there exists
an evident and intimate sympathy. The
fact, of that they are colleagues in the
great work of assimilation, is sufficiently
demonstrative of their mutual relation.



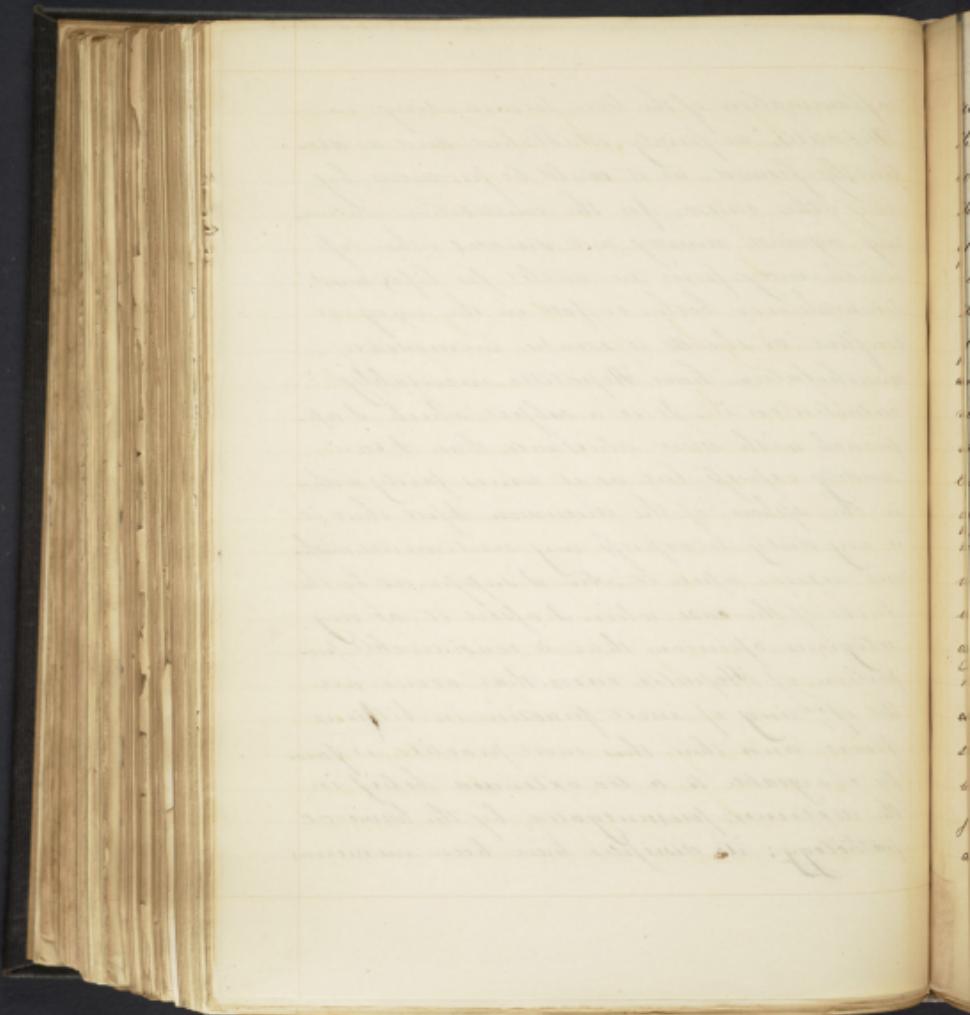
The germ of fever, then having been applied to
the stomach, and operating as a powerful and
morbid stimulus upon it, its healthy action
is for a moment suspended, or in other words,
a diseased usurps the place of its healthy ac-
tion. The surface sympathises with it. The blood
(as is evident from the palid appearance it pre-
sents) withdraws from it and is precipitated to the
interior, congestion in the liver is the in-
evitable consequence, which being already predis-
posed to disease, is the more susceptible to
morbid impression. But it may be enqui-
red, is not this stage succeeded by a hot one
and is not that in turn succeeded by a
sweating one, at the expiration of which
healthy action is restored. And healthy
action being perfectly restored, is it not
evident that disease has been eradicated.
First I repeat, by stating a simple fact
that the disease has a constitutional pre-
dilection to return after a definite inter-
mission, and its returning is proof that
morbid action has only been suspended.



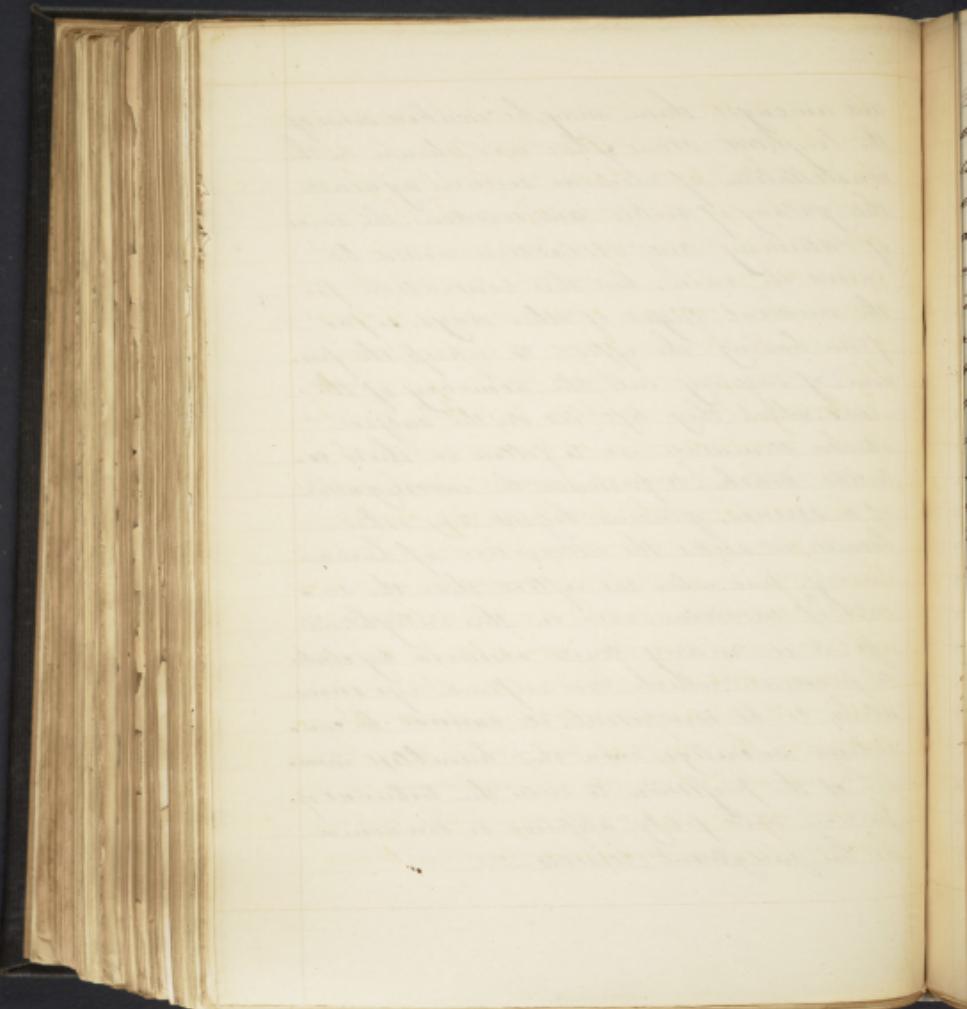
Secondly, that although it may not remove
the liver from being originally ~~and~~ sympatheti-
cally affected, ~~it~~ has taken on in a greater
measure or less degree, a morbid action inde-
pendent of the original impulse; to cure
which requires the application of remedial
agents, differing especially from those
which would have been required in the for-
mer stage of the original disease. When then,
instead of employing prompt and efficient me-
asures to relieve the system of the burthen which
oppresses it, by cleansing the stomach of its
vitiated contents by vomiting, and causing,
by active medicinal purges, the liver to ~~empty~~^{empty}
its contents; the physician is silently attending
to the operation of the vis medicatrix nat-
uræ, first to give her time to concoct a sup-
posed vitiated matter in the fluids, and then
to throw it out by the emunctories, resorting
to diaphoretics before active action is sub-
dued, and administering stimulants where
an overproportion already exists; the con-
sequence of this medical practice must be



inflammation of the liver, terminating in Hepatitis, as firmly established and as distinctly formed, as it could be produced by any other cause, for the constitution contending against remedy and disease either of which may form an outlet for life must triumph over both, or fall in the unequal conflict, or should it escape immediate annihilation, have Hepatitis, inevitably entailed on it. It is a subject which I approach with more reluctance than I can readily express but as it comes fairly within the sphere of the discussion, I feel that it is my duty to express my sentiments without reserve upon it. And I suppose by the facts of the case, when I assert it, as my religious opinion that a considerable proportion of Hepatic cases, that occur, are the offspring of merit practice in bilious fevers, and that this merit practice is fairly chargeable to a too extended belief in the doctrines, promulgated by the humoral pathology; its disciples have been numerous

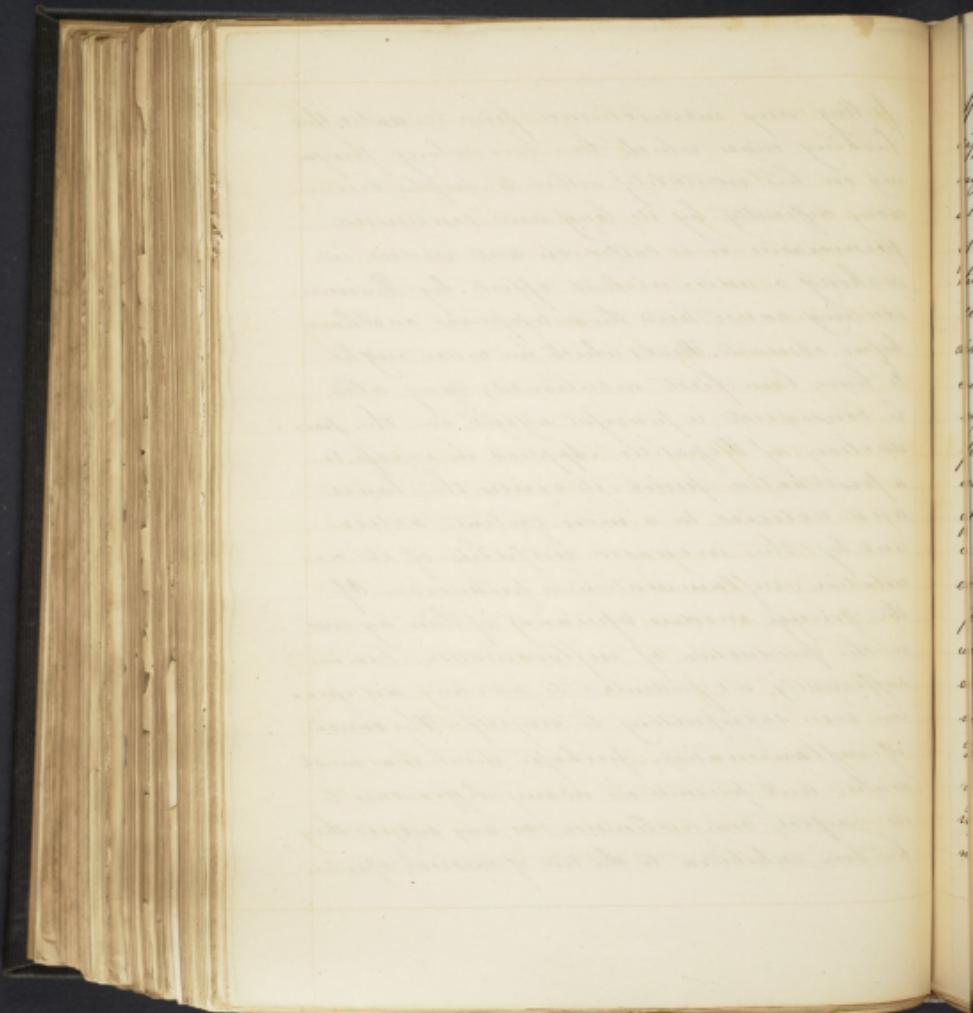


and amongst them may be ranked some of
the brightest stars that ever shone in the
constellation of medical science, against
this galaxy of virtue and wisdom, the voice
of calumny and detraction would be
raised in vain, but this veneration for
the medical sages of other days, so far
from having the effect to repress the free-
dom of enquiry into the accuracy of their
views which they left us on the subject,
should stimulate us to follow in their ex-
cellent track, to prosecute the investigation
of a science, glorious beyond any other—
because it seeks the alleviation of human
misery, and when we reflect that the sci-
ence of medicine, even in this enlightened
age, is in many parts obscured by clouds
to penetrate which our infinite eye seems
destined to be competent, it cannot be con-
sidered sacrilege even the humblest mem-
ber of the profession to enter the tribunal of
justice, and freely approve or condemn
as his judgment directs—



This is a theme boundless as the universe
but I must not allow myself to forget
the humble space I fill in the prospectus
and will content myself with the simple
declaration, that my opinions are in entire
coincidence with those who regard the sol-
ids as the sovereign disseminators of disease
action, to the adoption of these opinions
I have been guided by a light of unclouded
brilliance, to be enabled to follow in the
path irradiated by its beams, and to shine
with lustre borrowed from its inexhaustable
resources from the limits of my ambition.
The long and continued application of cold to
the body, is inevitably followed by vis-
ceral congestion, sometimes its deleterious
effects may remain invisible for a length
of time, and then burst upon the view
with all its accumulated violence. Thus a
man in the days of his youth may have
been much exposed to its influence, and
by the agency of a strong constitution
live on for an indefinite term without

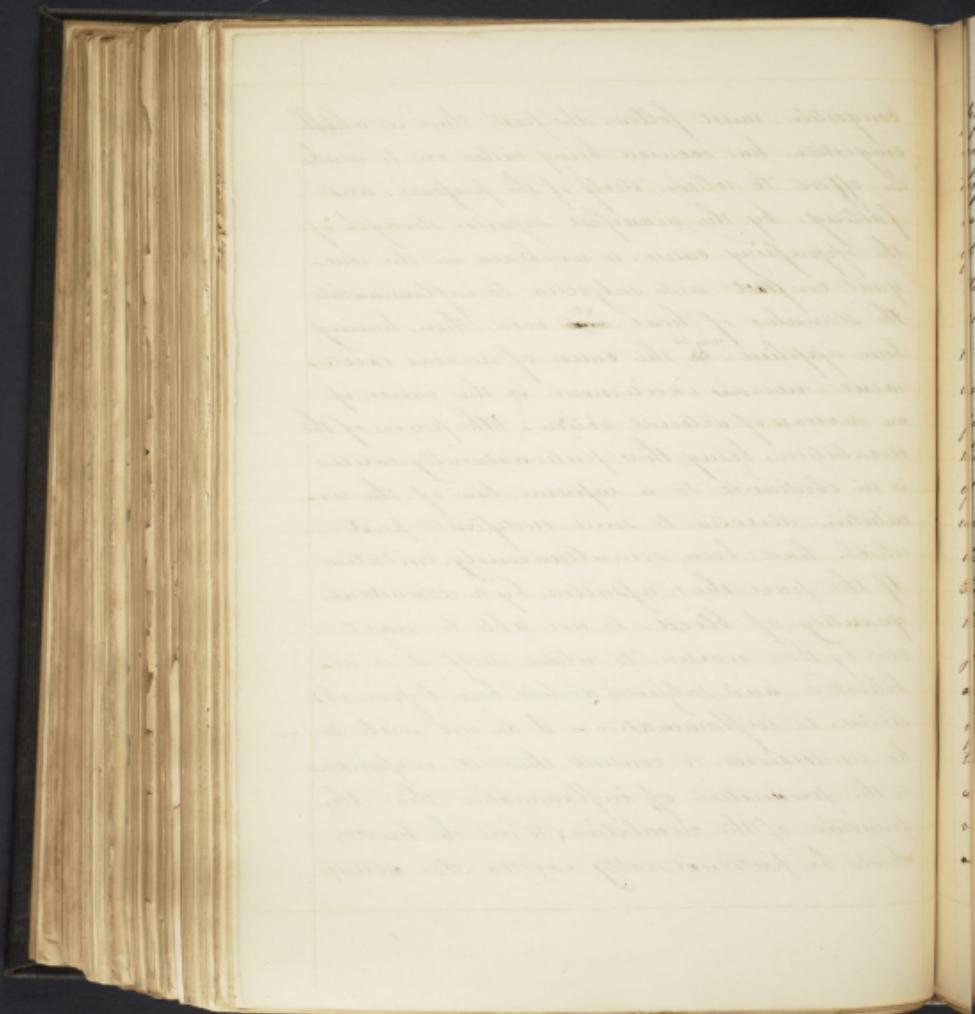
feeling any inconvenience from it, until this
lurking cause, which has been so long pre-
ying on his mortality, either triumphs over
every difficulty by its long and continued
perseverance, or is called on and aided in
making a more violent effort, by ~~some~~
exciting cause, and then appears as I have
before observed, Heat, (which in order ought
to have been first mentioned) may also
be considered a powerful agent in the pro-
duction of Hepatitis. Applied in excess, to
a protracted period, it excites the heart
and arteries to a more violent action
and by the increased impetus of its cir-
culation, inflammation is produced - Of
the precise modus operandi of these agents
in the production of inflammation, I am not
sufficiently acquainted to advance an opin-
ion even satisfactory to myself. The cause
of inflammation, perhaps, involves as much
doubt, and presents as many difficulties to
its perfect comprehension, as any subject that
has been exhibited to the view of medical opinion



If this were not a fact, so many eminent yet
different opinions would not exist on the same
subject. That they are both powerful stimu-
lants, exciting by a power independent
of any chemical or mechanical principle
the heart and arteries to a more violent action
deleterious or otherwise as circumstances may
dictat. I certainly believe, but a simple in-
crease of the circulation does not constitute
inflammation, a slight bodily exertion or a
paroxysm of joy exhibit all these phenome-
na - The pulsation of the heart, the vibration
of the arteries, are visible, yet inflammation
is not the consequence of this supernatural
excitement. Upon the ruins of the humoral
pathology, a medical theory has been erected
which confers on the nervous system (to the
exclusion of every other) the primary dissem-
ination of disease as well as healthy action.
Being disposed to concede to them this pre-
rogative to its utmost extent, I can easily
imagine that irritation may be produced by
nervous influence and that wherever it occurs

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congestion must follow. The part then in which congestion has occurred being called on to make an effort to relieve itself of the pressure, and failing, by the manifest superior strength of the opposing cause, is weakened in the unequal conflict and subjected to inflammation. The stimulus of heat ~~or~~^{may be} cold, then, having been applied, ~~is~~ the cause of nervous excitement - nervous excitement is the cause of an increase of arterial action - The power of the circulation, being thus preternaturally excited is in obedience to a supreme law of the circulation, directed to some indefinite part which had been simultaneously irritated. If the part thus aspirile, by a redundant quantity of blood, is not able to react and by that reaction to relieve itself, it is debilitated, and subjected as has been before observed, to inflammation - I do not wish to be understood, to contend that it is operative in the production of inflammation, that the fountain of the circulation (to wit, the heart) should be preternaturally excited. The arteries

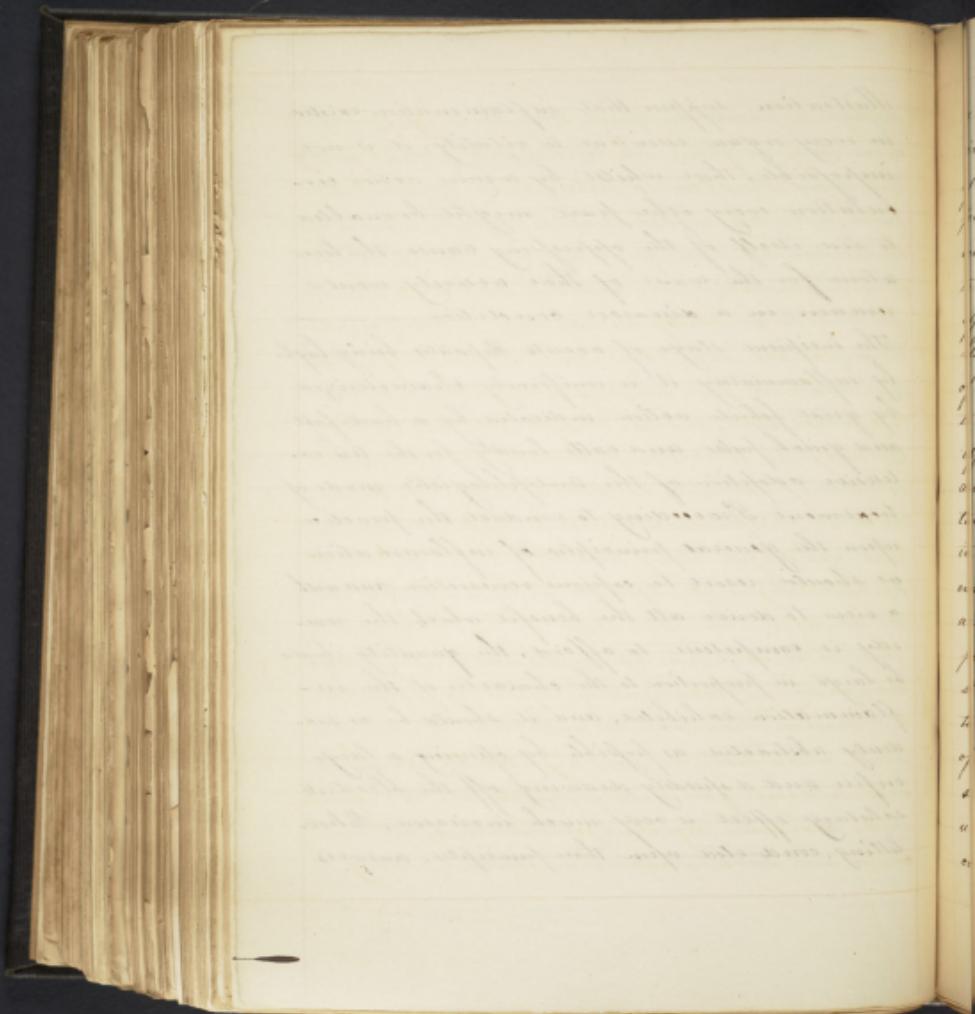


possess a power by which the blood is made to circulate in them, independent of the heart. They may therefore be preternaturally excited and produce inflammation perfectly independent of the heart or the general circulation. All this however does not explain why inflammation should locate itself in the liver, in preference to any other part, nor would I venture to affirm that it has any particular predilection for those parts, viscera. I am only advocating the opinion, that the protracted application of either heat or cold, is competent to the generation of inflammation, and that inflammation thus generated may locate itself in the liver. Perhaps I am justifiable in maintaining the opinion that the liver is peculiarly subject to be injured by inflammation. Considering that inflammation is the consequence of diminished action, and that the circulation in the liver is comparatively sluggish and inactive, it will be apparent at one view, that its powers of combating disease are in the same proportion feeble, by way of

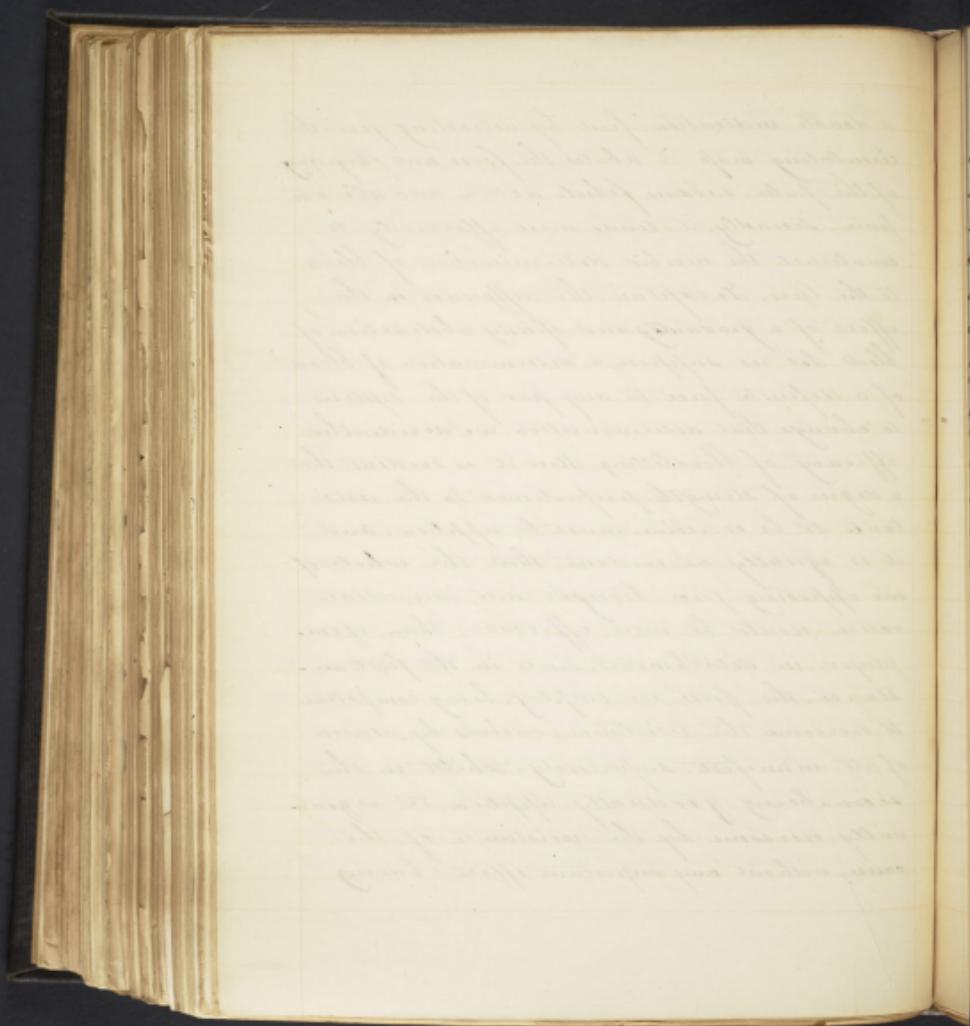
the same and the library had a large
part of the collection in books in
several languages and several
titles. I had intended to go
there to get some books but
as I was to leave on Friday after you &
I had intended you not to take any
books I made up my mind not to
take any and when I got there
I found many in the library which
were good and I took some
and I determined to return it to the
library. I am now in the library
and I have just come back from
the library and I will tell you
what I did.

Illustration. suppose that inflammation existed in every organ essential to vitality, it is not impossible, that whilst by a more active circulation every other part might be enabled to rid itself of the oppressing cause - the liver alone for the want of that activity, would remain in a diseased condition. — —

The incipient stage of acute Hepatitis being highly inflammatory it is uniformly characterized by great febrile action indicated by a hard, full and quick pulse, and calls loudly for the extensive adoption of the Antiphlogistic mode of treatment. Proceeding to conduct the practice upon the general principles of inflammation we should resort to copious venesection and with a view to derive all the benefit which the remedy is competent to offer, the quantity should be large in proportion to the character of the inflammation exhibited, and it should be as suddenly abstracted as possible by opening a large orifice and speedily drawing off the blood its salutary effect is very much increased. Blood letting, conducted upon these principles, answers



a double indication, first by detracting from the circulating mass, it abates the force and frequency of the pulse, subdues febrile action and allieviate pain, secondly, it tends more effectually to contract the morbid determination of blood to the liver. To explain the difference in the effect of a gradually and speedy abstraction of blood. Let us suppose a determination of blood of a definite force to any part of the system to change that determination we consider the efficacy of bloodletting. Now it is evident that a degree of strength proportioned to the resistance to be overcome must be applied, and it is equally as evident that the whole of our opposing force brought into immediate action would be more effectual, than if employed in detachments, since in the first instance, the force we employ, being competent to overcome the resistance, succeeds by reason of its manifest superiority, whilst in the second being gradually applied it is gradually overcome by the resistance of the cause, without any important effect having



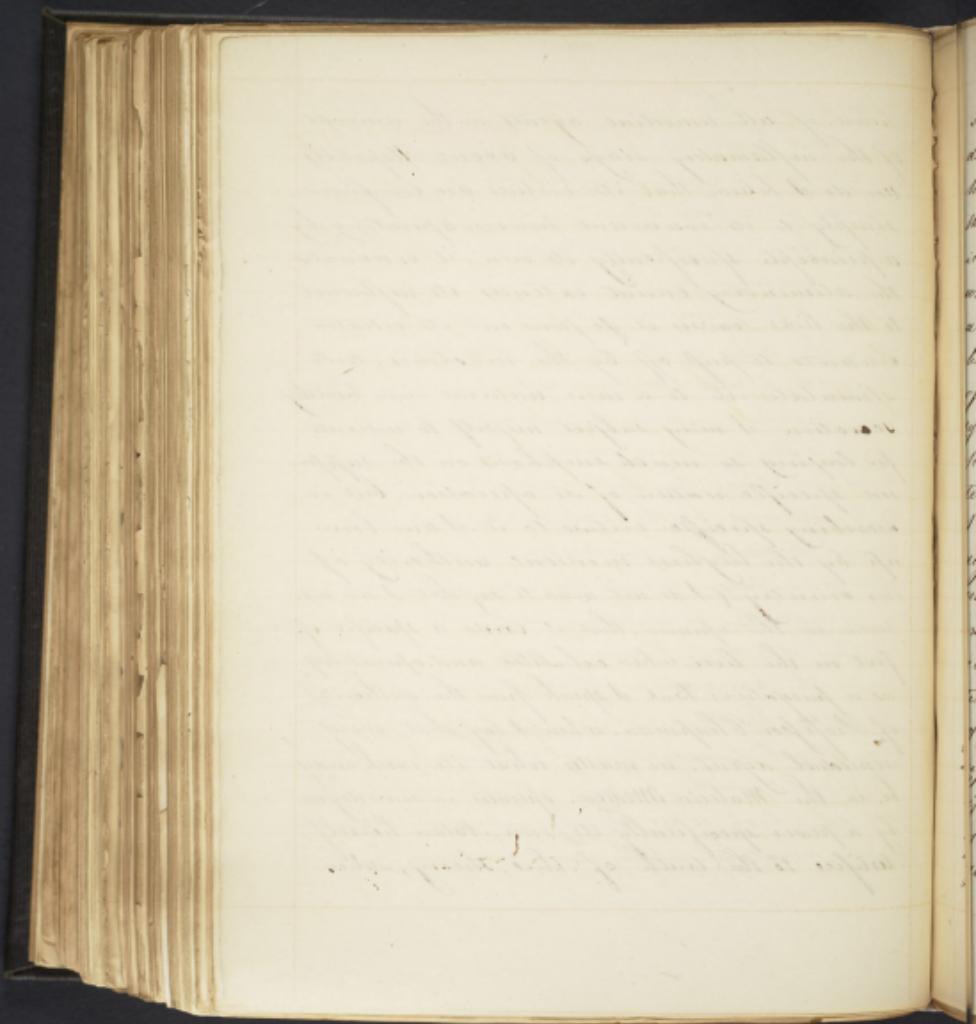
been produced. I do not think, that more
conclusive proof could be obtained on any
subject, than the following fact adduces in
support of the superior efficacy of drawing
blood from a large orifice. Actual experiment
shows that whilst a quantity of blood may
be drawn from a man, through a small or-
ifice, without causing him to faint, half the
quantity drawn from an orifice of increased
size will produce the effect. I have dwelt
upon this subject, because I deem it a very
important practical point. But bloodletting
valuable and indispensable as it is in the
cure of this disease, cannot be relied on, to
the exclusion of other aperient remedies.
we must therefore call ^{on} the aid of its
auxiliaries. The bowels will generally I might
say universally, be in a torpid condition
superposed with a putrefactive collection
of fecal matter, which, operating as an
extraneous substance, assists in keeping
up irritation, and aggravates in no ordinary
degree, the strength of the morbid symptoms.

the first time I have seen a bird of this species
in the field. It was a small bird, about the size
of a sparrow, with a dark cap and a white
breast. Its wings were dark, with some
lighter feathers at the base. Its tail was
short and dark. It was perched on a branch
of a tree, and was looking down at something
on the ground. I could not tell what it was.
The bird was very active, flitting from branch
to branch and from tree to tree. It was
very difficult to get a good look at it, as it
was always on the move. I finally managed
to get a good look at it, and it was a very
beautiful bird. I will never forget the day
I saw it.

present in the system. The liver, the throne of the disease, oppressed with a morbid collection of bile, gives origin to symptoms, to the speedy removal of which, the attention of the skillful practitioner will be speedily called. To meet these two indications, first to remove the torpid condition of the alimentary canal, secondly to relieve the liver of its morbid contents, and to invite a more vigorous and salutary secretion, reason points to the mercurial purgatives as the only efficient remedies in such cases.— I should choose the mild muriate of mercury to be followed by the exhibition of a dose of Bleom Reticuli, in preference to any other assistant purgative, of the use of Calomel, as a purgative, or indeed of any other remedy, in this disease, I cannot say that I speak from the conviction of experience. Judging however by its superior efficacy in restraining morbid secretion of bile, a symptom familiar in the history of intermittent fever, in which it is chiefly relied on, reasoning from analogy, teaches me to place it at the

o niente di più che contenga che si maneggi
con la bontà di Dio e volgendo verso di
lui con il cuore e con le mani e con le
voci come di domani. Domani si farà qualcosa
che non sarà mai visto da tutti quanti
e a farne parte sarà grande il nostro
dono e nostro merito di per sé non sarà
mai grande ma sarà grande cosa a dirsi di
quanto sarà domani. Da lì a quando sarà
tutta fatta la nostra missione sarà dura
perché domani domani dovrà essere fatto
il nostro lavoro di conoscenza, sia perché nulla
è stato fatto, sia che il nostro lavoro
fosse fatto solo quanto a conoscenza e conoscenza
non si può fare senza lavoro, mentre ciò si
può fare, anche se è un lavoro di poco
importanza e dunque si dirà che si farà
qualcosa a domani domani domani qui
di conoscenza e questa dovrà far un grande
numero di cose e non si farà domani domani
domani e neanche in un giorno appena sarà

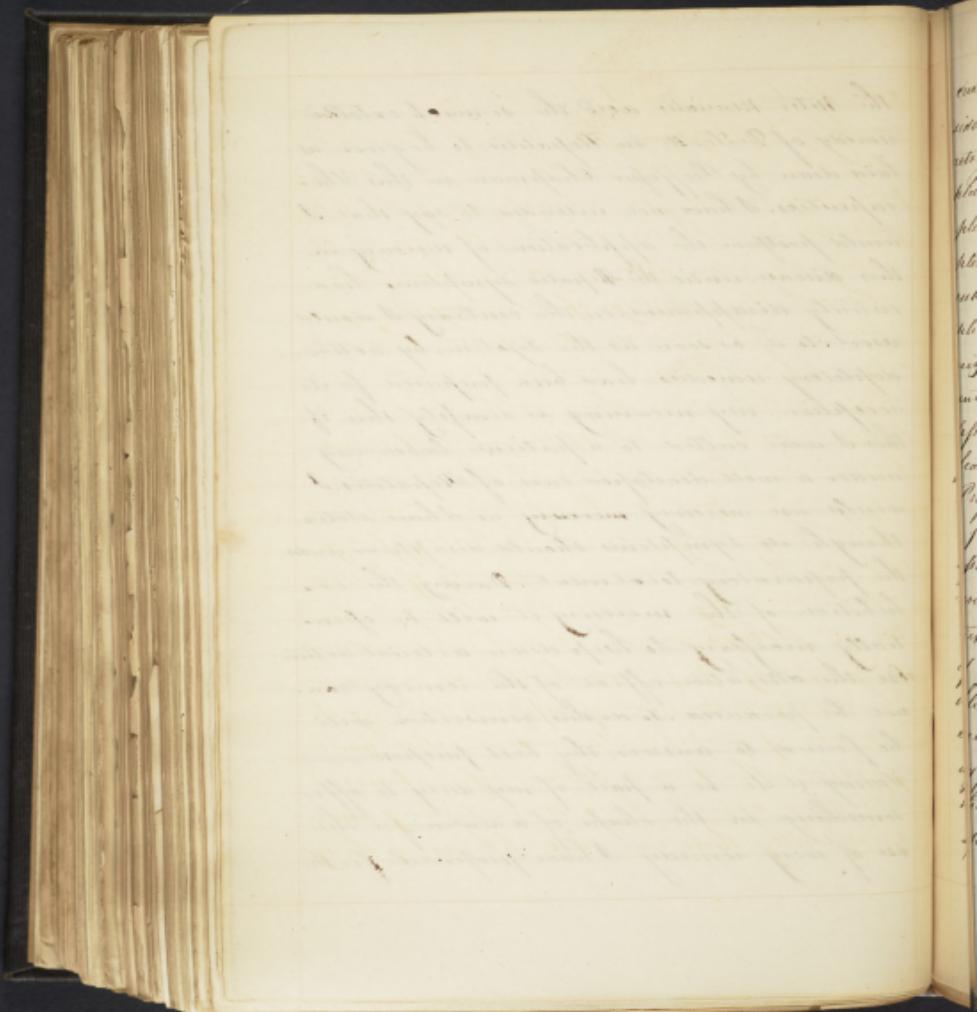
hand of all remedial agents. in the removal
of the inflammatory stage of acute Hepatitis
nor do I believe that its virtues are confined
simply to its evacuating powers. operating by
a principle specifically its own. it evacuates
the alimentary canal. extenuates its influence
to the liver. causes it to pour out its vitiated
contents. to pass off by the intestines. and
stimulates it to a more natural and healthy
secretion. I may subject myself to ridicule
for laying so much emphasis on the suppo-
sed specific nature of its operation. but in
ascribing specific virtues to it. I am borne
up by the highest medical authority of
our country - (I do not mean to say that I am sup-
ported in the opinion. that it exerts a specific ef-
fect on the liver. when exhibited and operating
as a purgative). But I speak from the authority
of Professors Chapman. when I say that every
remedial agent. no matter what its rank may
be. in the Materia Medica. operates in some degree
by a power specifically its own. Nature herself
testifies to the truth of this theory. when



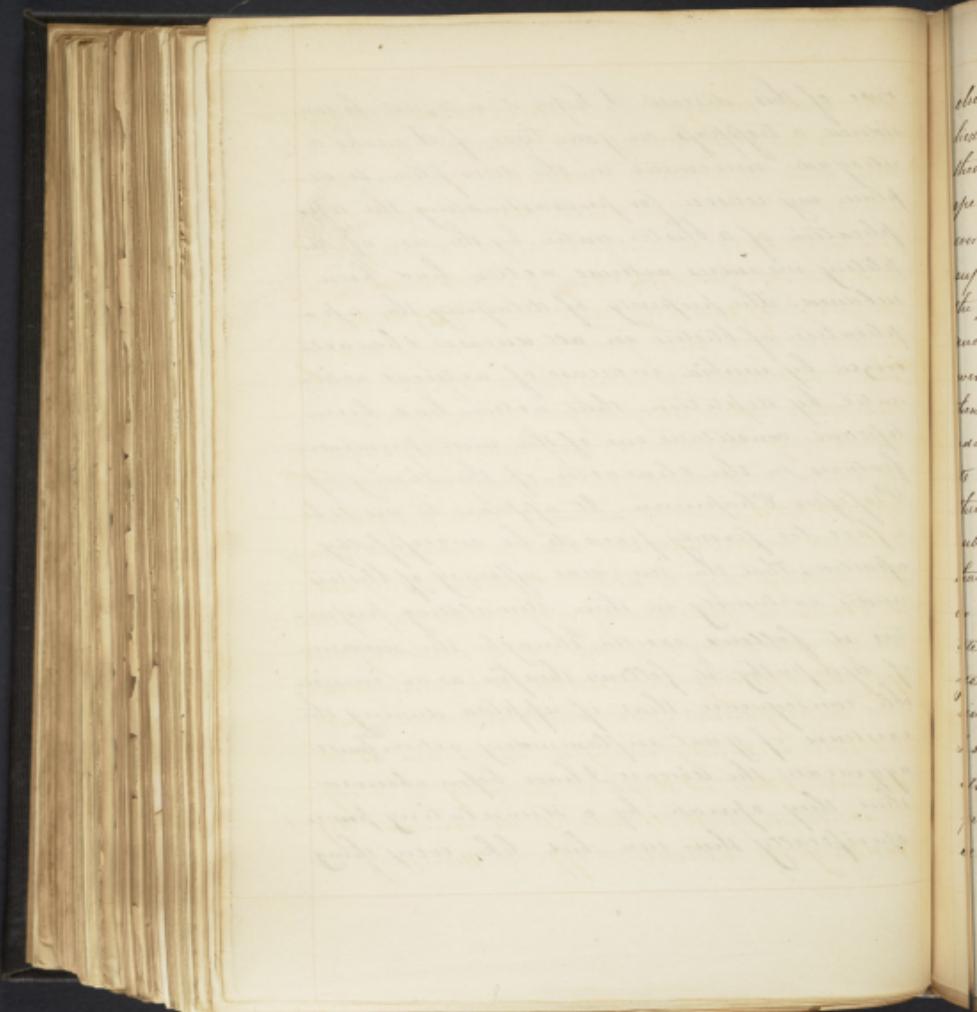
she, in her animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdom, extended and diversified as they are has with so careful a hand distinguished them by such visible peculiarities. This plan is based on infinite wisdom, without it all would be disorder and confusion. Why medicine alone should be excluded from it, remains to be satisfactorily explained by the opponents of the theory. That the influence of calomel given as a purgative on the liver, when compared with mercury, given to produce its astringent effect or to salivate, is inconsiderable I most willingly concur, but that in some degree an astringent effect is produced I most firmly believe - Depletion having been extended to a sufficient degree and arterial action subdued, we may then resort to blisters, to be applied immediately over the region of the liver - Blisters applied here, acting by virtue of a stimulating principle specifically their own, invite a determination of blood to the surface, remove morbid congestion in the liver, eradicate or relieve any re-

nant of pain that may be present and finally
tend to break up the morbid train of actions
going on in it, and cause it to take on a
more healthy and salutary ^{sounding} plan of trea-
tment thus laid down, aided by a strict
Antiphlogistic regimen will generally succeed
in removing an acute disease of the liver, if
it is not of a constitutional or hereditary dia-
thesis, in which case it is very apt to run
on to the chronic stage. But though we may
seemingly succeed in eradicating every he-
patic symptom, I doubt the propriety of
stopping here. Inflammation of glands varies
so much from that which is common to other
parts of the system, it is so much disposed to
assume a constitutional form, that I think, sound
policy strictly warrants us in resorting to the use
of mercury, to be given with a view of pro-
curing its alterative effect. To effect this purpose
the preparation of mercury I should prefer
would be, the blue pill, to be continued until
the glands of the patient are slightly affect-
ed. In some cases I should combine with it.

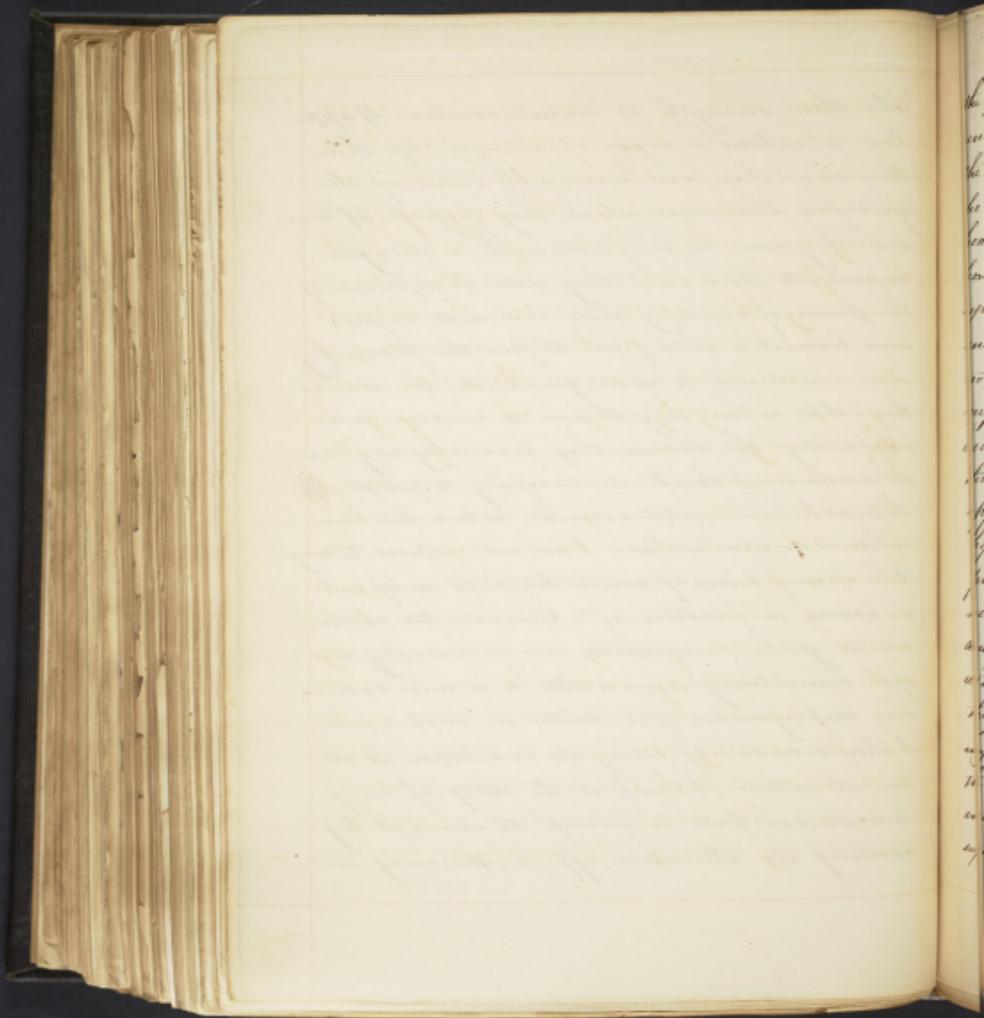
the Nitro Muriatic acid, the so much extolled remedy of Dr Scott in Hepatitis, to be given as laid down by Professor Chapman in his Hepatitis. I have not intended to say that I would postpone the application of mercury in this disease, until the Hepatic symptoms had entirely disappeared, on the contrary I would resort to it as soon as the system, by action depletory remedies, had been prepared for its reception. my meaning is simply this, if this I were called to a patient labouring under a well developed case of Hepatitis, I would use mercury mercury as I have stated though its symptoms should disappear under the preparatory treatment. During the exhibition of the mercury it will be essentially necessary to keep down arterial action as the astringent effect of the remedy cannot be produced. So do this resection will be found to answer the best purpose —
Setting it to be a part of my duty to offer something in the shape of a reason for the use of every remedy I have proposed, for the



care of this disease; I hope it will not be considered a trespass on your time, if I make a retrograde movement in the description, to explain my reason for procrastinating the application of a blister, until, by the use of depletion measures articular action had been subdued. The propriety of delaying the application of blisters in all diseases, characterized by morbid increase of articular action until by depletion, that action has been lessened, constitutes one of the most prominent features in the character, of the theory of Professor Chapman. It appears to me to be a fact too firmly fixed, to be successfully disputed; that the remedial efficacy of blisters resides exclusively in their stimulating properties, it follows, exerted through the medium of sympathy, it follows therefore as an inevitable consequence, that if applied during the existence of great inflammatory action, ^{they} must aggravate the disease. I have before observed, that they operate by a stimulating power specifically their own, but like every thing



else their strength is circumscribed. If applied to subdue a degree of strength less than their own, they will succeed by virtue of the specific stimulus, which they possess. If however they come in conflict, with a strength superior to their own, they will be deprived of the power of exerting their remedial virtues, and conducted into fuel to feed the flame they were intended to extinguish. So, the reason then, that when they do not ~~do~~ succeed in alleviating the disease, they invariably augment its violence. I think it necessary to postpone their exhibition, until arterial action has been subdued or diminished - I am not disposed to deny that many cases of acute Hydrocephalus may and do occur in practice of a character too obstinate to yield to a mild use of mercury, and yet completely amenable to a more extensive employment of it, whilst in such a case I should certainly carry its exhibition to its utmost extreme. I think it the duty of every practitioner first to attempt its removal by exciting its attenuative effect. Mercury in



The present state of medical science stands
unrivaled in the Materia Medica, but I trust
the time is not far distant when disease will
be made to acknowledge the sovereignty of the
healing art, without its having recourse to the
brisk effect of a salivation, from the intimate
sympathy that exists between the stomach
and liver. I have no doubt that in many if
not in all cases of acute Hepatitis, emetics
might prove highly useful at sea voyages. I
would always recommend believing as I do
that its modus operandi is particularly
applicable to the cure of disease marked
by a bilious diathesis. On the subject of dia-
phoretics I have been silent, their utility in
subduing febrile action is too manifest to be
doubted and consequently venesection having
with other depletory measures, been premised
they will prove valuable auxiliaries in contro-
lign inflammatory symptoms. To meet this purpose
the Antimorial powders are prescribed, as Calomel
enters into their composition I have no doubt of their
superior efficacy over any other dia-phoretic preparation.

